



# Talawanda School District

## COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

*Sharing the Key Messages, Connecting with Community Stakeholders, Strengthening Communication by Utilizing Trusted Communications Tools & Techniques, and Bridging the Gaps by Focusing on Relationships & the Development of Cohesive Partnerships!*

# Vision/Mission for TSD Communications Department:

**Vision:** *To inform and engage parents, students, faculty, staff, and community members about the activities of the Talawanda School District; and to coordinate and facilitate communications from the district departments and individual schools to the public.*

\* As aligned to the TSD Strategic Plan

**Goal:** *To deliver important school and district information to students, parents, staff, and the community. To maintain trusted communication tools within the district to deliver those key messages to the public. To research and expand communication tools as tools/technology/needs change.*

**GOOD**

*communication*

**IS THE BRIDGE**

*between confusion*

**AND CLARITY.**

# Key Communication Strategies:

- Define the key messages.
- Determine the target audiences/stakeholders.
- **Bridge the gaps/Build Relationships/Build Trust/Build Partnerships!**
- Personalize the messages when needed.
- Target messages/audiences when needed.
- Maintain a trusted website and use reliable communication methods.
- Social Media can be used to reach large numbers quickly, but use caution.
- Be available for two-way correspondence.
- Stability and consistency is critical.

# How do you determine the key messages?

- The superintendent, the administration, and staff must understand the goals and expectations for the district and the schools. It is important to have conversations that are regularly planned (as well as informal/FYI types of conversation) with leaders in the school district and the community.
- Know the goals (long term and short term) and the timelines so that you can share this information in an understandable/timely fashion using trusted sources. Setting up pre-determined times that you will communicate with parents is critical.
  - Clear roles for all members of the TSD BOE/Admin Team/Other Staff
  - Chain of Command/Utilize the Communications Flow Chart

# Determine who the stakeholders are...

- Internal: administration, teachers, other staff, students
- External: parents, grandparents, community groups, tax-payers, the city/townships, and the business community

\*I believe communications work best when leaders (including the communications professional) get out in the community, meet the people, build relationships with the diverse groups in the community, so that over time trust can grow between the school district and people in the community. This can mean actively participating in community events, serving on committees and boards...increasing the visibility of the school leaders.

# What does personalize the message mean?

- Each citizen in the community plays a role in TSD, so it's important to develop a plan that determines who needs to know first, what do they need to know, and when do they need to know it.
- I always think of this like a pyramid with the Board/Superintendent at the top, and moving down through the administration, teachers, other staff, students, parents, and the community. This can work in the opposite direction to where TSD admin/teachers/staff learn things from the community.
- The Communications Director always wants to think about the audience so that the details are meaningful for each group. (We can discuss examples)

# Which communication tools are necessary?

- A good website, that identifies on the main page a menu of tabs with easy to understand labels, easy to find forms, easy to navigate to school pages and departments, a comprehensive calendar, and a news blog for the district, don't forget to use photos. THAT IS IT! Don't bog your website down with too many pages and too much information that is not critical to students, parents, and interested parties. It must be useable.
- A reliable all-call system that utilizes call, email, and text messaging, regular district and school written digital communications (not necessarily in print all the time, but designed to use on website/social media/email/news), social media, and local news outlets. Don't forget mailers...when needed.

# Don't forget the value of two-way communication...

- We can use surveys for formal information collection.
- I like to gather informal information at school and community events by engaging with families and community members.
- School and community committees and boards.
- Correspondence, email (let's be careful but continue to use social media).
- It's important to demonstrate that we value our staff/students/families, that their values and priorities are understood by the district, and that the school district exists to serve the students and families of the community in many ways. We understand now more than ever that our schools are serving so many needs families have, but we can't lose the focus of our mission to educate.

# What other kinds of work are managed in the Communications Office?

- Surveys
- Data Collection (from trusted sources)
- Grant Writing
- Community Collaborations
- Admin for services
  - Electronic Forms
  - All-Call Service
  - Website

# Current Projects:

- ADA Website Compliance
- New Student Tours
- Federal/State Safety Grant
- State Safety Plans- State Compliance (C0-Chair TSD Safety)
- Updates to THS Athletic Websites and Mobile App
- Updating Trademarking
- Providing the Facts for Board Approved Levies (as needed)
- Quarterly Superintendent Video Information Updates
- Data Compliance for TSD Students/Parents
- Electronic Forms System
- Internal & External Messaging

Questions?